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[illegible] AT SEA THREE MONTHS AGO WITH THE LOSS OF 45 LIVES HAS BEEN CAPTURED TRYING TO SMUGGLE CUBANS TO THE UNITED STATES AT $1,000 AHEAD, THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED LATE WEDNESDAY.

AN INTERIOR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE SAID A SECOND SMUGGLER WAS SHOT AND KILLED IN A FIGHT WITH CUBAN COAST GUARDSMEN AND STATE SECURITY AGENTS NEW YEAR'S DAY. THREE OTHERS WERE ARRESTED. TWENTY CUBANS THE SMUGGLERS WERE TO HAVE TAKEN TO MIAMI WERE ALSO SEIZED, THE COMMUNIQUE SAID.

THE MINISTRY IDENTIFIED THE LEADER OF THE SMUGGLERS AS ENRIQUE GONZALEZ RODRIGUEZ, ALSO KNOWN AS EL FLACO, AND SAID HE HAD CONFESSED TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. A SECOND SMUGGLER, FRANCISCO CORDOBA TORIA, ADMITTED HE WAS AN AGENT OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA), THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID.

THE TWO OTHER MEN BEING HELD WERE IDENTIFIED AS ALBERTO CONCEPCION BARRERA AND JOSE MALCIVA VALDES. THE FIFTH MAN, RAMON BRAVO ALCALA, WAS KILLED, THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID.

GONZALEZ WAS THE SKIPPER OF A LAUNCH THAT WENT DOWN WITH 44 REFUGEES ABOARD--MANY OF THEM WOMEN AND CHILDREN--DURING HURRICANE INEZ LAST OCTOBER 2.

HE WAS PICKED UP ON A RAFT IN THE GULF OF MEXICO BY A BRITISH FREIGHTER OCT. 8. A SECOND CREWMAN RESCUED WITH HIM DIED LATER.

THE INTERIOR MINISTRY SAID THE MEN WERE CAPTURED SUNDAY WHEN THEY TRIED TO LAND NEAR DOLORES IN CUBA'S LAS VILLAS PROVINCE.

RELATIVES IN MIAMI HAD PROMISED TO PAY A $1,000 PER PERSON FOR THE 20 CUBANS THAT WERE TO BE SMUGGLED FROM THE ISLAND BY LAUNCH. A SIMILAR FEE WAS TO HAVE BEEN COLLECTED FOR THE 44 LOST DURING INEZ.

THE GROUP APPROACHED THE CUBAN SHORE IN RUBBER LANDING RAFTS AFTER MAKING THE VOYAGE FROM MIAMI IN A "V-20" TYPE LAUNCH, THE MINISTRY SAID.

IT SAID THE MEN USED RADIO COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT AND INFRARED FLASHLIGHTS TO SIGNAL THOSE WAITING ON SHORE AND ALSO CARRIED WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION, "WHICH DENOUNCES THE PRESENCE OF AN INFILTRATION GROUP TRAINED AND ORIENTED BY THE CIA."

THE COMMUNIQUE SAID RODRIGUEZ, WHOSE LAST ADDRESS WAS GIVEN AS THIRD AVE. S.W., MIAMI TOLD AUTHORITIES THAT WHEN A REFUGEE LAUNCH REACHED MIAMI FROM CUBA IT DOCKED AT A PIER WHERE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES MADE IMMIGRATION ARRANGEMENTS AND QUESTIONED THE REFUGEES "TO OBTAIN FIRST HAND INFORMATION ABOUT CUBA FOR USE IN THEIR SABOTAGE AND PROPAGANDA PLANS."

RODRIGUEZ SAID ON PREVIOUS TRIPS HE HAD USED TWO LAUNCHES SIMILAR TO THOSE USED BY U.S. HARBOR POLICE, THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID.

"THESE DEEDS MAKE MORE VISIBLE TWO ATTITUDES: WHILE THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT IS FACILITATING THE LEGAL DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY TO ALL WHO WANT IT, THE UNITED STATES SHOWS ITS REAL FACE BY PLAYING WITH THE LIVES OF FOOLS WHO SERVE AS INSTRUMENTS TO ITS COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ACTIONS AND SLANDER CAMPAIGNS," THE MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT ENDED.

[redacted]

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